THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • WEDNESDAY • JULY 26, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

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CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER QIN GANG SACKED JUST SEVEN MONTHS INTO JOB

No reason was given for his removal, leading to speculations of political rivalry and competition within China's all-powerful Communist Party

PREDECESSOR WANG YI TO TAKE OVER

State-owned media reported that China's rubber-stamp legislature had voted to appoint Qin's predecessor Wang Yi as his replacement. Qin's sacking comes at a time of increasing criticism of China's aggressive foreign policy, of which he is a proponent. It also comes as the US is showing keenness to mend its strained relationship with China, sending multiple delegations to Beijing

QIN WAS CLOSE CONFIDANT OF XI JINPING

- Qin was a close confidant of President Xi Jinping. However, analysts say, given China's highly opaque political system, it is difficult to ascertain how Xi and others see the relationship with him at the moment
- Qin had disappeared from the public eye a month ago sparking speculations that he was subject to an official investigation

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MEETINGS WERE HELD BETWEEN QIN AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER S JAISHANKAR

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Oppn plans no-trust motion

Ready for statement and debate on Manipur, Amit Shah writes to Kharge and Chowdhury

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

STEPPING up their offensive against the government on the Manipur issue, leaders of the Opposition alliance, INDIA, on Tuesday decided to move a no-confidence motion against the Modi government in the Lok Sabha.

The decision came on a day when Union home minister Amit Shah wrote to leaders of the Opposition, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Mallikarjun Kharge, seeking their cooperation in discussing Manipur in Parliament.

In the Opposition camp, floor leaders of 26 parties will hold a meeting at 10 am on Wednesday and are likely to submit a notice for a no-confidence motion to make Prime Minister Narendra Modi speak in Parliament on the Manipur violence, sources said.

The Congress issued a whip to all its MPs directing them to be present in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, sources added. All Congress MPs have been directed to meet in the office of the Congress Parliamentary Party at 10.30 am, said a leader. The Opposition knows that the numbers are not in its favour, but its leaders say the no-trust motion is its last-ditch effort to make Modi speak on the issue. "We have no other option. We are aware that the BJP can comfortably sail through," said a senior leader.

In his reposte, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said, "During our first term too, the Opposition brought a no-confidence motion against us. Subsequently in 2019, our seats increased from 282 to 303. Let them bring a no-confidence motion this time also; we will win more than 350 seats," he quipped.

In his letter , Shah sought the invaluable cooperation of Chowdhury and Kharge to discuss the matter. He said the government is ready to make a statement on Manipur in both Houses followed by a discussion.

"Lok Sabha is the cornerstone of our vibrant democracy, where the voice of the people through their elected representatives is heard. This House represents the hopes, aspirations and concerns of 40 crore Indians. The demand of the Opposition is that there should be a statement on Manipur by the government. The government is not only ready for the statement but also for discussion. But co-operation of all parties is expected," he wrote. Shah blamed the violence on a high court decision in May.

However, speaking to this paper, senior Opposition leaders said they will stick to their demand for a statement from the PM on the issue followed by a discussion under Rule 267. "Amit Shah can discuss the issue in Parliament, we want the PM's statement first," said a leader.

Meanwhile, massive protests were staged across Manipur's neighbour Mizoram against the ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kukis. Chief Minister Zoramthanga walked along with the protesters in Aizawl.

A massive demonstration against ethnic strife in neighbouring Manipur, in Mizoram's Aizawl on Tuesday | PTI

Broadband, internet ban partly lifted

The Manipur govt on Tuesday partially lifted its ban on internet and broadband. However, the ban on mobile internet continues. Internet services were suspended on May 3 after violence broke

'Ready for statement'

"The demand of the Opposition is that there should be a statement on Manipur by the govt. The govt is ready for the statement and debate. But co-operation of all parties is expected," Shah wrote to Kharge

Modi's East India Co barb to attack INDIA

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on INDIA (Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance), the new acronym for the Opposition alliance, at a BJP Parliamentary Party meeting here on Tuesday.

Calling the 26-party Opposition alliance the most directionless the country had ever seen, he cited reviled names like the East India Company, Indian Mujahideen and Popular Front of India to say people cannot be misled merely by the use of the country's name.

Briefing the media after the meeting, former law minister and BJP's Rajya Sabha member Ravi Shankar Prasad quoted Modi as saying that the Opposition alliance's sole agenda was to oppose the NDA in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, without a clear vision. Its conduct suggests that it has reconciled to remain in opposition for a long time, Modi said.

Modi cited the history of several irganisations, including terror outfits that had the country's name in their nomenclature, adding people cannot be mislead by such political tricks.

He urged party members to expose the hidden agenda and corruption of the Opposition and highlight the failures of Opposition-ruled states like West Bengal and Rajasthan.

In his pushback, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said "call us what you want", but "we are India" and "will rebuild the idea of India in Manipur".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge criticised the PM in the Rajya Sabha for neglecting pressing issues like Manipur while focusing on historical references. Later, in a tweet in Hindi, he said, "The Congress has always been with 'Mother India' i.e. 'Bharat Mata'."

Trinamool Congress members Derek O'Brien and Mahua Moitra asked the PM to prioritise discussions on important issues in Parliament rather than making statements outside it.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Siddu to hold meet with DCs as K'taka faces flood & drought

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE Siddaramaiah government has twin challenges now to tackle - flood and drought - in the state.

While certain pockets of 14 districts have recorded deficit rainfall, parts of 13 districts are witnessing heavy to very heavy rainfall now.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will hold a video conference with deputy commissioners of all districts on Wednesday and discussed rain-related issues.

Though the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre (KSNDMC) stated that certain pockets of Chamarajanagara, Mysuru, Mandya, Ramanagara, Kodagu, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Chikkamagaluru, Shivamogga, Bagalkot, Vijayapura, Ballari, Chikkaballapura and Vijayanagara faced rain deficit from June 1 to July 24 (south-west monsoon), parts of these districts are now witnessing heavy rain. However, certain areas of these districts have recorded deficit rainfall, making it tough for the government to handle the situation.

"The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning of potential flash floods in parts of Coastal and North-Interior Karnataka. The state government has reviewed the situation in risk-prone areas and is well prepared to tackle rain-related emergencies," Chief Minister Siddaramaiah tweeted.

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3 die in rain-related incidents in state

Bengaluru: Three persons, including two children, died in rain-related incidents in the state in the past 24 hours. One-and-a-half-year-old Spoorthy died when the wall of her house collapsed on her at Kumbaluru village in Davanagere district. Bhagya Challamarad (3), who was rescued after her house collapsed at Malapur village in Haveri district two days ago, died in hospital on Tuesday. Basamma (35), wife of Basavaraj Balagar, died when the roof of her house collapsed on her at Biral (B) village of Jewargi taluk in Kalaburagi district on Monday evening.

Farmland in Honnavar inundated by the overflowing Aghanashini river

Cong MLAs unhappy? CM downplays such claims

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru/Hubballi

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday downplayed claims that some Congress MLAs are unhappy with his cabinet ministers for not providing adequate funds for development works in their constituencies.

Addressing reporters at Hubballi, Siddaramaiah said if Congress MLAs have problems, they could discuss them at the legislative party meeting to be held on Thursday.

While a fake letter on Congress MLA BR Patil's letterhead, which stated that many MLAs are unhappy with the ministers for not providing funds for various development works, created a flutter in political circles, nearly 30 MLAs have written to the CM urging him to convene a meeting of CLP.

Siddaramaiah said the MLAs requested him to hold a meeting, but it was deferred in the wake of the proposed meeting of former AICC president Rahul Gandhi with them. However, it did not happen. Debunking claims, the CM said, "No MLA has complained against any minister."

Meanwhile, Patil said the alleged letter is fake and he would ask the police to take action against those responsible for it.

Koppal MLA Basavaraj Rayareddy said that they have written to the CM to hold a meeting of CLP to discuss the need for better coordination between MLAs and ministers.

Rayareddy, however, said they have nothing to do with the fake letter.

Meanwhile, the BJP tweeted, "Angered by the transfer racket and frequent interference in administration, 30 Congress MLAs have turned against 20 ministers and filed a complaint seeking CM's intervention. Within two months of coming to power, the Siddaramaiah government is facing a no-confidence motion from their legislators."

VIRAL EPISODE

'Voyeurism' takes communal turn in Udupi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Udupi

AFTER the episode of alleged voyeurism by three girls of a paramedical college in Udupi, social media went abuzz with posts by right-wing activists naming the accused girls and seeking police action against them on Tuesday.

The incident took a communal turn after pro-Hindu twitter handles named the accused Muslim girls while claiming that they targeted some Hindu girls. However, Udupi SP Akshay M Hakay clarified that the episode was dealt with at the college level and the videos have not been circulated as alleged. The accused girls admitted before the college authority to doing the act for "fun" and they had deleted the same after the victims came to know and objected.

The SP said the girls have been suspended by the college. There was no police complaint in this regard as the victims themselves did not want the matter to be escalated further, he added.

Many BJP leaders, including CT Ravi and Udupi MLA Yashpal Suvarna, supported right wing activist Rashmi Samant's tweet stating that the Congress government was trying to silence the voice of right wing activists. CONTINUED ON: P4

CJI: Parties have a point in opposing RTI inclusion

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

CHIEF Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Tuesday said that political parties may have a point when they fear that bringing them under the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act may encroach their "internal decision making".

He made the remarks as the court considered a batch of pleas seeking to declare national and regional political parties as "public authorities" under the RTI Act.

Responding to a submission made by a counsel representing the Communist Party of India (Marxist) that there cannot be requests (under RTI) on why a candidate was selected, and demands for details on the internal decision-making process of a party, Chandrachud said, "They have a point. They say don't ask us to disclose how we chose our candidates. I don't think you can do that."

The pleas, which were filed by Association for Democratic Reforms and Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, had argued that the Central Information Commission (CIC) in 2013 and 2015 had declared political parties to be public authorities and passed an order for the inclusion of parties receiving benefits from the government under the RTI.

HC asks its team to visit FSL, NIA office

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court asked its central project coordinator and his technical team to visit the Forensic Science Laboratory, Madiwala and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) office to inspect the CCTV footage and storage capacities at the two centres, where one of the accused in the murder of Praveen Nettaru in Mangaluru was interrogated.

A division bench of Justices Sreenivas Harish Kumar and G Basavaraja issued the direction after hearing a petition by Mohammed Shiyab from Dakshina Kannada, who is accused No. 1 in the case. He questioned the order on March 13, 2023 by the special court, rejecting his prayer to issue directions to provide CCTV footage about the alleged ill-treatment of Mohammed Jabir, accused No. 18, at the centres.

"If the footage dated November 6, 2022 at the office of FSL and from November 7, 2022, to November 14, 2022 at the office of NIA are still available, they may be collected or retrieved or copied to a portable device like pen-drive etc., and submit the same to the special court in a sealed cover for making use of the same, if necessary, at the appropriate stage, during the trial. If the footage is not available, a report to that effect shall be given to this court", the court said.

If the footage at the office of NIA are still available, they may be collected or retrieved or copied to a portable device like pen-drive etc

Karnataka High Court

The court, however, dismissed the writ petition as it relates to furnishing the call details recordings (CDRs) among NIA officials and the advocate.

Jabir, while giving his confession statement before the special court in February 2023, submitted that he was ill-treated by NIA officers, compelling him to give statements the way they wanted.

EXPRESS READ

SC slams Centre, Nagaland govt on quota

New Delhi: The Centre is not willing to implement the Constitution, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday, as it slammed the Centre and Nagaland government over non-implementation of one-third reservation for women in civic body elections | P10

IMF raises India's 2023 growth forecast to 6.1%

Washington: The IMF on Tuesday projected a growth rate of 6.1% for India in 2023, which is a 0.2 percentage point upward revision compared to the April projection. According to the fund, global growth may fall from 3.5% in 2022 to 3% in 2023 | P13

CYBER ATTACKS

Avg data breach cost touches ₹179mn in '23: Report

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE average cost of data breach in India reached "Rs 179 million in 2023, an all-time high and almost a 28% increase since 2020," according to IBM Security.

In its annual 'Cost of a Data Breach Report' released on Tuesday, IBM Security stated, "Detection and escalation costs jumped 45% over this timeframe, representing the highest portion of breach costs indicating a shift towards more complex breach investigations." The breaches occurred between March 2022 and March 2023, the report stated. Data breach costs continue to grow, reaching a record-high global average of $4.45 million, representing a 15% increase over three years.

Of all the data breaches, phishing at nearly 22%, has emerged as the most common attack type in India, followed by stolen or compromised credentials (16%). "Social engineering was the costliest root cause of breaches, followed by malicious insider threats," the report stated.

Social engineering, also called 'human hacking', is the tactic using psychological manipulation to trick users into making security mistakes or giving away sensitive information.

"With cyber attacks growing in pace and cost in India, businesses must invest in modern security strategies and solutions to stay resilient," said vice-president, Technology, IBM India & South Asia, Viswanath Ramaswamy. P13

No entry for bikes, autos, tractors on e-way from Aug 1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FROM August 1, two-wheelers, three-wheelers, tractors and other agricultural vehicles will not be allowed to enter the Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway.

A notification was issued on July 12 and will come into effect from August 1, a top official from National Highways Authority of India told *The New Indian Express*.

They will be blocked at the entry points and are free to use the service road. Non-motorized vehicles and multi-axle hydraulic vehicles will also be restricted from entering the e-way.

While there were demands before NHAI to allow two-wheelers with high cubic capacity (indicating power output of the engine) to be allowed, with the toll fee, all requests were declined and a blanket ban was imposed on all kinds of two-wheelers. P2